



Cambridge Peace Commission

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge Peace Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 15, 2009, 6:00-8:00

51 Inman St. – Conference Room B, second floor

Minutes

Attending: Linda Brion-Meisels, Ardeene Goodridge (chair), Grove Harris, Thomas Massaro (note taker), Mushtaque Mirza, Pat O'Brien, Radhika Rao, Nancy Seymour, Rachel Wyon

Guests: Frank Connelly, Tami Wilson, Jeff Hansell

Staff: Brian Corr

Regrets: Cecilia Duran, Martin Federman, (leave of absence), Abha Sur

Absent: Larry Ward

Opening, Note-taker, and Check-in

- **Opening:** We opened with Brian reading a reflection of Archbishop Desmond Tutu on what he learned from his work on the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" and we all shared some insights into what we appreciate in his statement.
- **Note-taker:**

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Regular Commission meetings will be the second Wednesday of each month:

- We set dates for the remainder of the spring, adhering to the basic principle that **we will meet on the second Wednesday of each month**, with slight adjustments for holidays such as Passover (the first night of which falls on April 8 this year). So future meetings will be held on Feb. 11, March 11, April 15, May 13, and June 10.

2008 Peace & Justice Awards Dinner:

- Sunday, November 16, 2008, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Dante Alighieri Cultural Center, 41 Hampshire St., East Cambridge

Updates and Reports

Update on Gaza Resolution

Several members shared their experience of and reactions to the Monday, January 12 meeting of the City Council at which the City's resolution on the violence in Gaza was passed by an 8-0 vote. Many encouraging aspects of that action were noted.

Messages to the New Obama Administration

We discussed and revisited an earlier proposal for the Peace Commission to collect and pass on to the Obama Transition Team messages of hope and support for peacemaking from Cambridge citizens, especially our schools. We have experienced some delays, but the plan can still go forward, even though it will happen after the Inauguration on January 20. Brian will very soon send out an email to schools and other Cambridge residents soliciting such messages intended for the new administration, and will set a deadline of about Feb. 1. He will collect and transmit these messages so that they arrive in Washington in time for Feb. 12, which is the symbolic date of Lincoln's birthday.

Peace Commission Budget and Goals for FY 2010

Brian shared with us the budget plan documents for 2009 and 2010, and explained the rationale for what appears in the documents. Related issues were discussed, including: resources available and needed, the website (Grove and Brian and Jeff will work on this), and Sister Cities (an item to be re-evaluated at the future retreat, especially regarding whether the Peace Commission is the best place in city government to house the Sister City initiative).

Retreat Planning

We discussed many issues regarding our next retreat: timing (not clear yet), purpose (is it for business items or community-building?), format (a discrete day during a weekend, or over the course of a few regularly scheduled meetings?), and whether to have a facilitator. We also discussed the possible role of a planning committee for the retreat and who would serve on it. For the time being, we took the names of volunteers to work with Brian on the preliminaries of retreat planning: Tammy, Frank, Radhika, and Rachel.

New Commissioners

The topic of membership came up. It is of course important to replace retiring members. Nancy Seymour read a letter announcing her immediate retirement from the Commission (after two years of service), and Linda reminded us that this was also her last meeting (after about fifteen years of service), and we took the opportunity to express words of personal appreciation for both of them. Brian has in mind some possible new members, and we discussed the best ways to clarify our procedures for inviting and approving new members. There has been no uniform procedure in place up to now, except the need to gain approval from the City Manager and the City Council before an appointment is finalized. Broad support was expressed to establish a better-defined process for identifying and approving new members, especially with the goal of maintaining broad representation on the Commission of all the constituencies (gender balance, ethnicity and geographical considerations all being relevant) of Cambridge.

Closing

Members were invited to review photos (on Brian's computer in his office) of the Peace and Justice Awards after adjournment.

The meeting adjourned after a check-out exercise at 8:10 p.m.